
Al Rowlett, Mental Health Expert, Appointed to Stem Cell Agency Board

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San Francisco, CA: Alfred "Al" Rowlett, LCSW, MBA, CPRP, has been appointed as the new patient advocate for mental health on the Independent Citizens Oversight Committee (ICOC), the governing Board of the state's stem cell agency, the California Institute for Regenerative Medicine (CIRM).

Mr. Rowlett is the Chief Operations Officer for the non-profit mental health agency, Turning Point Community Programs (TPCP). He joined the agency in 1981 as a rehabilitation counselor.

"As a mental health advocate, I'm thrilled to be appointed to serve where vital stem cell research and regenerative medicine will lead to advances in therapies which will improve so many lives," said Mr. Rowlett.

Mr. Rowlett comes with a long history of working with, and advocating for, people with mental health problems. He has oversight of TPCP operations in Stanislaus, Sacramento, Merced, Yolo, Nevada, Placer and El Dorado counties. He earned a B.A. from Ottawa University in Kansas, a MBA from Golden Gate University in San Francisco, a Masters in Social Work from California State University, Sacramento and is also a Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW) and a Certified Psychiatric Rehabilitation Practitioner (CPRP).

"The burden of mental illness is one of the highest of all diseases, and mental disorders are among the most common causes of disability in the US," says Jonathan Thomas, PhD, JD, Chairman of the ICOC. "Having someone with Al's experience, expertise and passion for working on mental health issues join the Board ensures that the mental health community will continue to have a strong voice in the stem cell agency."

Mr. Rowlett, who was appointed to the ICOC by State Assembly Speaker John A. Perez, (D- Los Angeles) also serves on several other boards including Child Abuse Prevention Center (CAPC), California Institute of Mental Health (CIMH), and is a Commissioner for the United States Psychiatric Rehabilitation Association (USPRA) Certification Program.

In 2007, Al won the National Association of Social Work- California and California State University – Heart of Social Work Award and the Asian Pacific Community Counseling – Inspirational Mental Health Leadership Award.

Jon Shestack, who previously held the mental health advocate position on the Board, said he felt honored to have been able to serve: "I am proud to have played a small role in establishing the most robust environment for stem cell science in the world, one that will certainly lead to treatments and cures in our lifetime and the lifetime of our loved ones."

About CIRM: CIRM was established in November 2004 with the passage of Proposition 71, the California Stem Cell Research and Cures Act. The statewide ballot measure, which provided \$3 billion in funding for stem cell research at California universities and research institutions, was overwhelmingly approved by voters, and called for the establishment of an entity to make grants and provide loans for stem cell research, research facilities, and other vital research.

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